THE COURIER

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The Bethel Town Farm in North Bethel as it appeared in 1979 shortly after its closing and just prior to its razing.

"For Ye Have The Poor With You Always": Dealing with Poverty In A New England Town, The Case of Bethel, Maine, 1806-1979

by Stanley Russell Howe

Editor's Note: A version of this paper was given at the June 1996 meeting of the Bethel Historical Society. It has been edited and enlarged for publication in this issue.

Poverty in the United States has been increasingly a frequent focus of historical conferences and journals in recent years, but the literature dealing with the subject remains minimal. Historians need to look at the topic in some detail and from a variety of perspectives.

This article uses town meeting and poor records, town reports and local newspapers to document how the poor were perceived and treated from the first town appropriation in 1806 until the closing of the last existing town farm in Maine in 1978. I am indebted to Jean Hankins, Ph.D. of Otisfield, for many insights found in her article, "A Cage for John Sawyer: The Poor of Otisfield, Maine," which appeared in *Maine History* (Vol. 35, No. 2, Fall 1994, pp. 96-115), and subsequent discussions with her on the topic of poverty in New England.

Since the days of Cotton Mather, unfavorable remarks have been made about Maine and Maine people. Words like "lower order" and "not of much consequence anywhere else" were used among other negative epithets to describe residents of the Pine Tree State.

Most New England towns, particularly those in the hinterland of Maine, were settled by poor men and women with often limited options. Only ambition, a little luck, and the presence of timber and fertile soil made the difference in many instances.

The Puritans had almost a neurotic aversion to idleness. Work was the means to success. Those who did not prosper were somehow on the outs with God. Prosperity and His Favor were linked in the theological and the popular mind. From the Puritan clergy's sermons condemning idleness in the 17th century to the novels of Carolyn Chute in the late 20th, New Englanders have had an almost singular focus upon the poor.

Once the town meeting had begun in the seventeenth century to exert its influence upon New England town life with the creation of the office of Selectman, Assessor and Overseer of the Poor, there were few issues that were overlooked by town meetings. In addition to the customary road, school, and appropriation questions, the poor were usually part of the warrant, although not ordinarily given the highest priority. Issues ranging from control of stray animals to property lines to maintaining moral standards were frequently of more concern to voters. Regardless of the issue, however, the town meeting was generally the final arbiter of difficult and troublesome situations faced by those inhabiting the small towns and villages of New England.

Almost from the earliest days, those judged "deserving poor," who were often old, infirm, young or mentally and physically handicapped, also became known as the "impotent" poor. The "non-deserving" poor were considered able to perform work and therefore not eligible for assistance. Providing support for these individuals, it was feared, would lead to a whole litany of bad habits that the Puritans had warned about during the founding of New England. Even in a Christian society, there could be such a thing as too much charity. As several observers warned, the poor might begin to take public relief for granted and

(continued on page 6)

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In May 1998, the Society acquired the historic Robinson House for operations as an addition to its facilities. Named for the original owner of the house, O'Neil Robinson (1797-1867) and adjacent to the headquarters for the last twenty-five years, the Dr. Moses Mason House, the building would then be known as the Robinson House. Once renovations are completed, critically needed space for exhibits, expanded museum shop and craft operations, more adequate research room and collection storage as well as an education room for all ages would be among the results of this expansion. This project also includes an endowment phase, which will make it possible to support the Regional History Center more comprehensively in regard to programming, conferences, lectures, exhibits, and publications relating to Northern New England. Contributions are welcomed to make all this happen and may be made in a number of ways through cash, securities, stock, etc. For further information, please call the Society at (207) 824-2908 or (800) 824-2910 or write to P.O. Box 12, Bethel, ME 04217-0012 or e-mail (history@bdc.bethel.me.us).

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THE BETHEL SOLDIERS OF '61

From the pages of the OXFORD ADVERTISER, 12 November 1886, compiled by Judge C. F. Whitman of Norway.

It was now the season of the year when it had become necessary to prepare suitable quarters for winter. Holes several feet in depth were dug in the earth, and over these were erected shelter tents. Hot fires were kept for several hours to dry the moisture from the ground. Boards, straw and other material, when obtainable, were used for floors. The chimneys were made of small sticks placed cob-house fashion, and plastered inside and out with mud. In such quarters as these, the soldiers of the regiments passed the winter.

On the 8th of January 1863, Col. E. A. Scammon resigned and went home, and Lieut. Col. C. S. Edwards became in name, as he had long been in fact, the real head of the Regiment. Thenceforth he led it on the field of battle, where none could gainsay bravery or military qualifications, or deprive him of the credit and just reward due him. I quote from Bicknell's *History of the 5th Maine:* "The command of the regiment now devolved upon Lieut. Col. Clark S. Edwards, who had already proved himself a soldier and a fighting man of unusual bravery and courage, and which indeed was maintained during the entire period of service."

The rules which govern us in writing this narrative are different. It is not our purpose to obscure or cover up, but to open and bring forth to the light the heroic deeds of the Bethel soldiers, and their comrades so far a practicable, that all who read may know of their sacrifices, sufferings and valor in defense of this, the best government on the face of the earth.

During January, the troops were ordered out of winter headquarters for a campaign in the mud. It came to naught and they were soon back in their old camps.

"The King of France, with forty thousand men marched up a hill and then marched down again." Whether this campaign had anything to do with the growing dissatisfaction with the management and condition of the Army of the Potomac, we do not know. Its state of efficiency was apparent, and in early spring Burnside was superseded and Gen. Joseph Hooker was appointed to take command. A radical change took place. The army was reorganized. Every branch of the service was improved, and by the first of April he had undertaken one of the most effective bodies of men ever seen on this continent, and second only to the grand army of McClellan at the beginning of the war.

A grand review took place on the 3rd of July. The President was there to witness it. The troops presented a splendid appearance, and more than satisfied with what he had seen he went back to Washington, feeling that at last effective work toward putting down the rebellion was to be done. By the last of the month Hooker's Army was in motion. On the 2nd and 3rd, the battle of Chancellorsville took place.

In order to mask his movements, Hooker made a point of crossing the river below Fredericksburg with Gen. Sedgewick's 6th Corps. Lee, deceived by this, expected that our troops would pass the river on his right, but the bulk of them crossed on the left. Though out-generaled at first, the Rebel chief swiftly placed his forces in position to check Hooker's advance. He won the final victory through the breaking of Howard's 11th Corps, though his troops were greatly inferior to ours in point of numbers, but Stonewall Jackson, his best general, was mortally wounded.

The fighting of the 6th Corps, on which was the 5th Maine, was in the vicinity of the battleground of the previous December, where the heights of Fredericksburg were stormed and carried. Their hottest fighting was at Salem Church, where they failed to carry the enemy position and were forced to retreat with heavy loss. The following is Col. Edwards' description of the whole movement written several days after the battle of Chancellorsville: "We are once more back in our old camps, and I have great reason to thank God for preserving me through the last ten days. We left here on the 28th of April and went on picket till about five o'clock in the afternoon when we had orders to rejoin the brigade near Falmouth Heights. I took my regiments across lots, logs, and fences, and found the Brigade in camp on the same ground we occupied the night of the 11th of last December, before the battle of Fredericksburg. It was eight o'clock in the evening, and at once I had orders to go to Brigade and Division headquarters where I found Gens. Bartlett and Russell and all the colonels of our Brigade in council. It was there decided to cross a river during the night in open boats, and hold the position till the bridges were laid for the remainder of the troops with the artillery to cross on. There were sixty pontoon boats, and each would carry forty men. It was decided that Russell's Brigade of our Division should go over first, ours next, and a New Jersey Brigade third, but as Russell's command was small, his men only took one-half at the boats, and ours quickly filled the rest, and in fifteen minutes after we had started the river was full of boats. We all landed about the same time. The Rebels gave us one volley, and ran in all directions. It was about three o'clock in the morning when we crossed and took our position, and in one hour three pontoon bridges were laid, each thirty six rods long. One of our batteries crossed and we went to the front just about daylight and took two lines of rifle pits. Our loss was three killed and five or six wounded. We held our position through the day. Reynolds' Corps crossed about a mile below us, losing about one hundred men. Marsh was in this corps, but I did not learn that he was hurt.

That night we did not sleep very soundly as we were expecting an attack at any minute, but the next morning found us in quiet possession. Through the day we advanced our lines a little and throwed up some rifle pits. Friday, May 1st, we were skirmishing all day and Saturday we advanced to a ravine, taking eighty prisoners. I received orders to have my command in readiness to move at mid-

night, and at half-past three Sunday morning the 6th Corps were moving to the front, with Newton's Division on the extreme right, Howe's in the center and ours on the left.

The Rebel Batteries opened upon us with shot and shell. I was ordered to carry a point on the railroad with my regiment, and to do this we were to move up a ravine where it was supposed the enemy's batteries could not touch us, but we found to our sorrow that they had full range of it. We passed within two hundred yards of one of their earthworks, which it was supposed our batteries had silenced, and they opened upon the brave boys, and in less than five minutes time I lost twenty-three men. Not a man showed the white feather and everyone did his duty." Of this movement the historian of the Regiment says, "Nobly did our men press forward. The ranks seemed moved down only to be closed up again by as brave soldiers as ever carried a musket. On they pushed through that pass of death without a break or a halt. Gen. Bartlett sitting on his horse nearby amidst bursting shells could only exclaim as he saw these men rushing into the jaws of death yet undaunted--knowing--feeling--realizing only one thing--their duty, noble men, noble men. Aye, they were noble men, and they won for themselves upon that day true honor and glory. Filing at once under the bank of a stream which ran nearby, the Regiment rallied while the remainder of the Division assumed their position. Shielded in a measure from the screaming shells which seemed to fill the air, we listened to the roar which was indeed terrible and deafening.

"It was in this fight," writes the Regiment's brave Colonel, "that Dan'l Stearns, Joseph Sawyer, and Adj. Bicknell, Lieut. Stevens and Capt. Robertson were wounded. I rode my horse Mac. He got grazed by a musket ball but he carried me through one of the worst places I ever saw a horse go. It is the first time that I have ridden him in the battle, and I prize him now more than ever. About this time Newton carried the first hill in front of the town. Soon the Rebels gave way in another place, and then the hill in front of the town was ours. We moved on through the city and over the hill on the right of it toward Hooker's army. We could hear his cannon thundering away in the distance. We ought to have stopped here, but flushed with victory on we went. We soon overshot the rear guard of the enemy and gave him battle, but he kept falling back on the plank road leading to Mordonsville. We halted a few minutes and ate our grub, and then we up and started after them again. About four miles from the city we came to a wood, where we got a few shots from a Rebel battery, when our noble Division deployed in the line of battle. We found the enemy in overwhelming numbers. The fight became hot and severe, and thousands of men fell in less than it takes to write it. Our Division numbered about 7000, and we lost in twenty-five or thirty minutes nearly half of our men. The whole was done with musketry firing. We fell back about forty or fifty rods, where we halted when our batteries opened up their advancing columns and drove them back into the woods. My regiment was on the extreme left and were the last to fall back. When I gave the order the enemy had passed both my flanks. One minute more and we should have been surrounded. We lost in this day's fight more than one hundred men. I laid down that night with a sorrowful heart. My brave boys saw more fighting that day than any other since they were mustered into service. I could not sleep, and I got up. Hearing that Sergt. Brown was still alive and near our lines, and that two of our wounded men had crawled back after dark I went with our chaplain and found them and they were taken to our ambulances to the hospital. I got back about two o'clock in the morning and we lay in a ravine and got a little sleep. We lay in a ravine when the Rebels tried to shell us out, but our batteries took position, and we supported the 1st Mass. At five o'clock the enemy the enemy massed his forces for a charge, and brought five to one against us. At this I must admit that my knees were a little weak, but still knew if our batteries could hold them till dark and they did not press our flanks too hard, we could get back to the river. Our little Division was in the center of the front line at 6 o'clock with Howe's and Newton's Division on our flank. As the sun was sinking behind the western hills, we were attacked on three sides. Our corps had in all one hundred cannons which belched forth in rapid discharge and tore great gaps in the charging lines of the enemy. It did me good to see our batteries thin their ranks. I sat on my horse watching the progress of the fight. When they got within about five hundred yards from us, twenty pieces opened upon there all at once. The devils in hell could not stand before such a fire, and the Rebels broke and ran in confusion. One of their regiments tried to rally behind a splendid looking residence when the Mass. battery we were supporting turned their guns upon it, and in five minutes it was a mass of ruins. As soon as it was dark we fell back to the river. There was but one bridge to cross on and it took some time to get over. I lay down tired enough, and fell asleep when the shells were flying among us. In an hour, perhaps, our regiment with the 121st N.Y. were ordered on picket while our Division was crossing the river. I need not tell you that I felt proud that my little regiment should be one of those selected to cover the retreat.

(continued on page 6)

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

As I write my last column after three years as President, I realize how much has happened in the Society and in the community during this period.

The biggest thing, of course, was acquiring and moving into the Robinson House and launching our expanded role as a Regional History Center for Northern New England. Fund-raising for the desired renovations continues.

Next largest in my mind was New Year's Bethel--a very well received community-wide event which the Society started 1998/99 and plans to continue in cooperation with other organizations.

In the Town of Bethel's new comprehensive plan, adopted in 1998, the importance of the town's historical assets is clearly recognized, and a number of recommendations made on ways to preserve and enhance them.

Bethel's post office was retained in its historical location since 1942 on Main Street as a result of vigorous citizen efforts and a business owner's initiative.

The new "Welcome" signs on highways entering Bethel also highlight the historic nature of the town.

Because of these and many other examples, I believe we are in a "rising tide" of community support for recognizing, preserving, and utilizing historical assets.

Walter Hatch

(Soldiers of '61, continued from page 5)

I was the last to cross. As soon as we were over, the engineers corps destroyed the bridge. We had been under fire for seven days. When I got back to camp I found my tent floor all right and the chimney standing, and soon got to keeping house again. All is still and quiet once more. The last ten days seem like a dream, and I wish to God it was, for as I look into the tents of my Regiment, I find many empty or with but one where there had been three before. Some of the finest men have gone. It is now three o'clock p.m., and Capt. A.M. Edwards is here all right. Young Bartlett was here a few minutes ago. He got a slight bruise on the leg. Lieut. Del. Twitchell lost two fingers. Capt. Leppein lost a leg. Bartlett told me his battery had six killed and twenty wounded, and had forty-five horses killed. I hope soon to hear from Sergt. Brown and the rest of the wounded."

(to be continued in the next issue)

Basketmaker Louise Seames arranges her wares during this year's Sudbury Canada Days. This was the first year the Society had access to the Robinson House porch, which was a fine place for the art show and historical crafts to be enjoyed by many visitors.

(Bethel Poor, continued from page 1)

count on it for income. Accordingly, most New England towns gave assistance to the poor grudgingly.

Needless to say, those who "went on the town" were subject to considerable scrutiny and their cases were usually publicly discussed at town meeting. Those designated "paupers" often surrendered their rights to vote and hold office. The town also had the authority to sell any property the dependent poor might have as a practical means of supporting them. Some of the poor were so humiliated by needing public assistance that they could not bring themselves to ask and suffered in silence. Untold thousands must have endured inhuman conditions while others with no choices had to seek help. The Selectmen could provide assistance or could put the poor up for auction (vendue system), where the lowest bidder prevailed. Those who could work cost the town little or nothing, but old or infirm individuals were more expensive to maintain.

Bethel used the vendue system, which was considered less expensive and more economical from about 1817 until the Maine Legislature outlawed it in 1847. One can only imagine the humiliation that both children and adults faced with their disposition at town meeting. Moreover, they had to deal with the fact that many of those supporting them also faced a shortage of hard cash thus their generosity was at best a grudging or resentful variety.

There were other problems in dealing with the poor. Often the insane or mentally unbalanced were lumped in the public mind with the poverty-stricken. Since there was no mental hospital in Maine until the 1840s, this added to the burden faced by local authorities.

Veterans of the American Revolution and the War of 1812 attempted to gain pensions to keep themselves off the poor rolls. If they were unsuccessful in their pension applications, they sometimes moved to towns where they believed assistance might be granted more generously. This led to migrations to and from New England towns for both veterans and non-veterans. Once these mobile poor became a burden, towns would move them back to their place of origin or try to obtain funds for them from the town from which they came. This led to a continuing chronicle of towns competing with each other to rid themselves of the poor who might be returned to the place where they were deemed to have originated. For example, Bethel Selectman Israel Kimball in 1830 had to go to Bingham, Maine to bring a "pauper" home. His expenses for the trip were paid by the town.

As the 19th century progressed, the poor required an increasingly larger portion of the town's budget. To keep costs down, the auctioning of the poor, however inhumane it appears to us today, was a practical solution. The Selectmen were obliged, however, to step in and move someone from one household to another because of mistreatment.

The poor in the early days of the 19th century were not abstractions as they appear today with all the confidentiality of contemporary "safety nets." Bethel's voters could (and did) decide at town meeting just who needed assistance and who did not. Frequently, however, the decision was left to the discretion of the Selectmen in their roles as Overseers of the Poor.

The disposition of the poor was generally considered toward the end of the warrant. Necessities provided by the town were usually food, clothing, and medical expenses.

In Bethel, the first town meeting to raise money for the poor appears to be the one in 1806, which appropriated $60. Two years later it was $200; the following year it had dropped to $150.

In 1818, the warrant read ominously: "To set up the poor to be auctioned off to the lowest bidder." At this meeting, the amount varied according to whom needed assistance. James Hodsdon was "to take John Burk free from expense till the April meeting." Apparently Burk was able-bodied and there was hope on Hodsdon's part that he could get some work from him.

At the 1819 town meeting, the town appropriated $600 for support of the poor. There were no details as to who got assistance, but on 21 April 1821, records of a special town meeting recorded: "The town paupers were set up to be struck off to the lowest bidder. William Burk set up to be struck off to the man who will provide his mending, washing, and tobacco the cheapest." Timothy Bean won that honor for twenty-eight cents per week for one year.

The illness of a poor man named Foster was the subject of the March 1822 meeting. At the meeting, there was a discussion as to the method to be used to assist the less fortunate and then what to do with this man who was sick at Foxwell Swan's.

In July 1822, a town meeting was held to determine what method would be used to dispose of the case of Susie Farwell and her infant child. The meeting "struck her off to Reuben Bartlett at $2/9 per week until the town meeting in September." Bartlett was to pay all expenses and "make all necessary provision for their comfortable support except clothing and doctor's bills."

For many years in a row, the same names dominate the town meeting records. It is clear then that most of those who required support from the town did not break out of a the cycle of poverty. In an age when there were few opportunities to gain self-sufficiency, it appeared to many that the biblical injunction about the poor always being present appeared the natural state of things.

The 1826 meeting directed George Bean to take Calvin Twitchell, his wife and three children back to Oneida, NY. For this task, he received from the town $84.50, a considerable sum in those days.

Establishing a town workhouse was discussed at the 1834 annual meeting, but nothing appears to have been decided. The sum of $1000 was raised for "town charges" that year.

After the outlawing of poor auctions by the State of Maine in 1847, the town began to look at the acquisition of a town farm. At the 1851 town meeting, it was voted to establish a committee to investigate acquiring a town farm. The Selectmen named themselves the committee; the article providing for the purchase of town farm was passed over several years in a row.

During the Civil War, there was much discussion about the support of soldier's families. The town fluctuated between some support and none, but the 1865 meeting provided for $1500 for assistance to aid the families of soldiers.

At the 1868 meeting, it was voted to appropriate $3800 to buy a farm on Kimball Hill in East Bethel of Charles C. Bryant and J. W. Kimball to become the town farm. Not much is known about this experience, but several of the poor are buried in unmarked graves in the East Bethel Cemetery.

It is likely that there were problems in operating the town farm since in 1873, the town meeting voted to sell "the town's poor house and all property connected with it." No information has been discovered as to why this decision was made.

Having sold the town farm, subsequent town meetings discussed the purchase of another farm. This was finally completed in 1880 with the purchase of the former Peter Smith farm in North Bethel.

With the publication of a more comprehensive town report in 1887, it becomes possible to learn much more about the town farm operations. Not only is a listing provided of the residents, but there is a complete inventory of all equipment used at the farm as well as its financial status. Farms were in theory supposed to produce enough produce not only to feed the inhabitants but also to have enough to sell in order to pay the expenses. This would

The annual Society picnic was held this year at Pooh Corner Farm in Mason as guests of Society members Richard and Carole Duplessis and family. State Horticulturist Ann Gibbs, who oversaw the redesign of the Blaine House gardens, was the featured speaker.

relieve the taxpayer from the burden of providing so much public support. It rarely worked as conceived, but every dollar raised by the farm meant one less the public had to provide. A superintendent with his wife usually were in charge of operations.

In the 1887 annual report, the poor were divided into several categories. The "insane poor" required $388 for support. The "poor off the farm" cost $597. Support for the poor paid by other towns came to $68. For that year, the town farm had four residents" three women ages 76, 63, and 72 plus one man, age 27. Itemized expenditures during that year totaled $701 while receipts came in at $394. Board was furnished at the town farm for five "paupers." One thousand dollars was appropriated for the poor that year; the budget was overspent by $311.

The next year, 1888, the total value of the contents of the town farm was listed as $3117. A salary of $300 was paid the superintendent. That year the expenses of the farm were $778 with receipts totaling $506, resulting in an overdraft of $272. The overdraft was larger the next year ($480) in a year when the town raised $2000 for schools. A disastrous growing season for 1889 was blamed in part for the shortfall in income. In addition, the report listed one person described as an "industrious laborer with a large family," who "has been an exceptional charge in the past year in the pauper account, owing to a broken leg, received last Christmas."

In 1890, the town appropriated $2000 for schools, $3000 for roads and bridges, and $500 for a lock-up. The construction of the latter building on High Street, which exceeded its appropriation by $85.75, was to house "tramps," who usually rode the trains and stopped off for some food at houses in the village. Attitudes toward these visitors were generally unfavorable in Bethel as elsewhere. From the 15 April 1890 *Oxford Democrat* is found this description: "A dark looking piece of humanity in the shape of a tramp invited himself to supper with Miss A. Bean one night last week. Bethel is getting to be quite a resort for tramps."

Not much was ever appropriated for the so-called "tramp" account. Kind neighbors in the vicinity of the "lock-up" sometimes supplemented the sparse rations

(continued on page 8)

(Bethel Poor, continued from page 7)

provided by the town. In 1893, the amount Bethel spent feeding people here was $25.45. That figure had not changed much by 1915 when C. L. Davis received $24 for "care of the tramps."

This hospitality was certainly grudging as this item from the 3 November 1893 *Oxford Advertiser* makes clear: "L. T. Barker tells your correspondent two tramps called at his house asking for food. Mr. Barker told them the place provided for such was located on High Street, known as the Lock-Up. H.C. Barker, turnkey, has his hands full, working like a tiger for their wants. After being treated so coolly by the citizens they thought it best to take up their beds and walk. Monday and Tuesday they left down the railroad tracks, thanking the people of Bethel for their kind reception."

The Lock-Up, also known as "Hotel Barker" after H.C. Barker, the turnkey, was frequently in the news in the *Oxford Advertiser* during 1897 as there appear a number of unflattering references to tramps and vagrancy. In April 1897, a report appeared of "thirteen tramps" in town. This statement was followed by the question, "What are we coming to?" By November of that year, the *Advertiser* recorded, "The tramp question is becoming an important topic of the day with us. The more we feed, the more we have to feed, and there is going to be a halt, and that right soon." The local magistrate, Justice Grover, began to sentence these homeless men to the Oxford County jail for 60-90 days at hard labor for the alleged crime of vagrancy. Nothing appeared to stem the flow. Constable Barker was quoted as saying that he did not intend "to entertain professional tramps at the expense of the Town of Bethel." The resort to law enforcement raids on tramps seemed to discourage the migration as the *Advertiser* crowed on 28 December 1897 that the "raid made on tramps seems to be working as only two have called for lodging." But future columns continued to complain about the presence of those unfortunate enough to be looking for some shelter and food in Bethel.

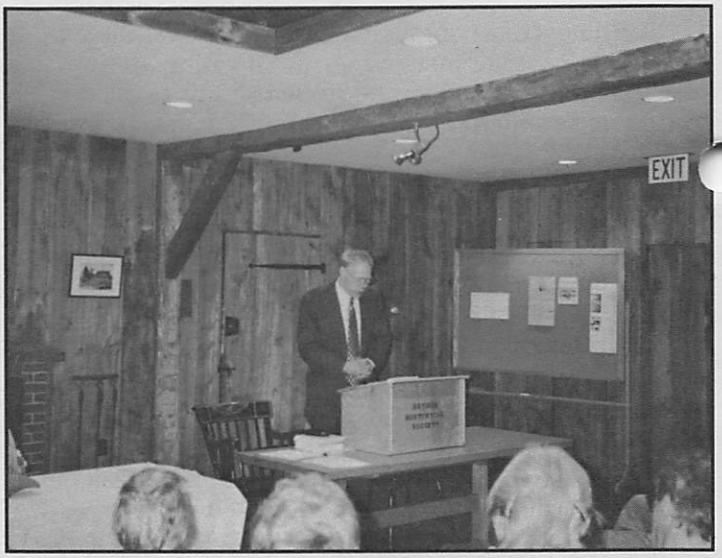
By the turn of the century, it becomes clear that the town farm expenses almost always exceeded its appropriation. The diet on the farm appears to be high in carbohydrates. It is likely that in some cases, vegetables and fruits were grown on the premises, so they do not appear on inventories. Numbers on the farm seemed to increase after 1900, but there were never more than ten at any given period according to the town reports. In 1909, there were also three deaths at the farm.

In the early years of the 20th century, the poor were usually listed in four different accounts, town farm, poor not on the town farm, the lock-up and tramp account, and the poor at the insane hospital. Their names were listed in bold type with all expenses incurred by the town beside their names. Confidentiality would have to wait until the middle of the century.

Renting the town farm to a manager became the practice by the 1920s. In 1920, C. E. Burgess leased the farm for $50 per year. It is assumed that taking care of the residents was part of the deal.

Not all funds used to support the poor were municipal. In the 1921-22 report, contributions of $112.50 each were received from William Bingham II and William J. Upson.

In the 1930s, as Margaret Joy Tibbetts has observed in her research on the town during the Great Depression,



Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., Director of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, delivered a lecture on the life and work of his former high school history teacher, Maine historian Elizabeth Ring, in May as part of a year-long series on Maine historians.

those needing relief continued to grow during that decade. By the 1940s, the appropriation had been raised to over $4000.

By 1951, confidentiality had become the rule. There were no more names in bold type. In the 1950s, state aid for welfare became an increasingly important factor along with State Aid to Dependent Children, which in the 1960s received approximately $2000 per year from the town.

No longer was the "tramp problem" a reality in the 1950s; other alternatives to vagrancy were being reviewed. In the 1954 report, newly arrived town manager O. T. Rozelle wrote: "As you know the 'Lock-up' is kept for the use of people going through town with no place to stay or money to provide for one. It is not too satisfactory to the people of that neighborhood. Perhaps a better solution may be found." Other ways must have been found since the "Lock-Up" was razed in the 1960s.

The final vestige of 19th century institutions for the poor, the town farm, continued to provide housing until 1978 when it was closed by the Board of Selectmen. Shortly afterward during the following year, the buildings were demolished. Thus ended an era when the town was primarily responsible for the welfare of the poor. It was not always the best of situations. One cannot measure the level of humiliation and suffering the poor must have endured during those years, but at least something was done in many instances, however unwillingly on the part of the town, to make their lives a little less bleak.

BOOK NOTES

The following titles are available from Heritage Books, Inc., 1540-E Pointer Ridge Place, Suite 300, Bowie, MD 20716. Heritage Books accepts Visa/MasterCard/Checks/Money Orders. The shipping and handling charge is $4 per book.

WHAT'S NEWS IN COOS COUNTY, NEW HAMPSHIRE? VOLUME 2, compiled by Milli Kenney. 1996. 441 pp., illus., paper. $25. The compiler has assembled a chronological

scrapbook of personal events covered in the COOS REPUBLICAN from December 1855 through December 1859. WHAT'S NEWS offers transcripts of all the news that mentioned local people from all over New Hampshire, Vermont, southern Quebec, and western Maine. New Englanders visited and settled in many other places such as Boston, New York, the developing mid-western states, and California. There are numerous stories here, as well as vital records, reports of accidents and local news. The news articles are presented in their original wording. Facsimile advertisements identify local businessmen. Photographs of locations in northern New Hampshire and Vermont illustrate this work, which also is comprehensively indexed. Book Number K156

ABSTRACTS OF DEATH NOTICES (1833-1852) AND MISCELLANEOUS NEWS ITEMS FROM THE MAINE FARMER (1833-1924). Compiled by David C. Young and Benjamin Lewis Keene. 1997, 471 pp., index, paper, $25.50. Here is collected a multitude of abstracts including birth, death and various news items arranged alphabetically by surname for easy reference by researchers and genealogists. Book Number Y582

WHAT DID THEY MEAN BY THAT? SOME MORE WORDS. VOLUME 2. Compiled by Paul Drake, this useful work defines more than 1500 words and expressions not found in his previous volume to assist present generations in understanding obscure and obsolete words found in diaries, letters, ledgers and court records.84 pp. $13.50. Book number D613.

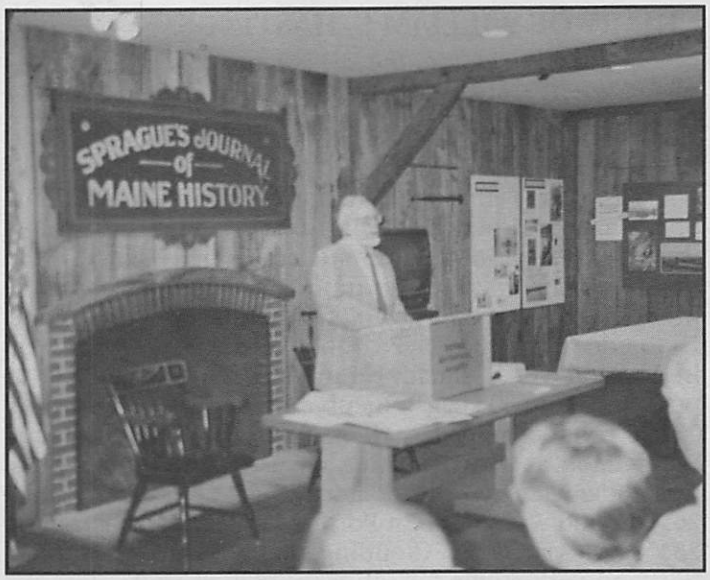
Also available are TARTAN FOR ME! SUGGESTED TARTANS FOR SCOTTISH, SCOTCH-IRISH, AND NORTH AMERICAN SURNAMES WITH LISTS OF CLAN, FAMILY, AND DISTRICT TARTANTS (Seventh Edition) by Philip D. Smith. 172 pp. $26 Book Number S539.

FABIUS M. RAY'S STORY OF WESTBROOK, edited and indexed by Karen Sherman Ketover, contains a wealth of information relating to this Cumberland County, Maine city. A full index makes this volume particularly useful. 250 pp. $25.00. Book number K176

Henry Milton Sylvester's INDIAN WARS OF NEW ENGLAND, Volumes 1 (528 pp. $37.00, book number S949), 2 (625 pp., $42.00, book number S950), and 3 (703 pp., $46.50, book number S951) have been reprinted.

MEMOIR AND OFFICIAL CORREPONDENCE OF GEN. JOHN STARK WITH NOTICES OF SEVERAL OTHER OFFICERS OF THE REVOLUTION; ALSO, A BIOGRAPHY OF CAPT. PHINEAS STEVENS AND OF COL. ROBERT ROGERS WITH AN ACCOUNT OF HIS SERVICES IN AMERICA DURING THE "SEVEN YEARS' WAR" is available for $32.50.

THE GREENING PEERAGE OF SCOTLAND: A GENEALOGICAL AND HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF ALL THE PEERS OF THAT ANCIENT KINGDOM; THEIR DESCENTS, COLLATERAL BRANCHES, BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, AND ISSUES. TOGETHER WITH A LIKE ACCOUNT OF ALL THE ATTAINED PEERS; AND A COMPLETE ALPHABETICAL LIST OF THOSE NOBLES OF SCOTLAND, WHOSE TITLES ARE EXTINCT. COLLECTED FROM PARLIAMENT ROLLS, RECORDS, FAMILY DOCUMENTS, AND THE PERSONAL INFORMATION OF MANY NOBLE PEERS. ALSO THE PATERNAL COATS OF ARMS, CRESTS, SUPPORTERS, AND MOTTOES, MOST ELEGANTLY ENGRAVED is a reprint of a work originally published in 1767. 339 pp. $28.50. Book Number P116.



Marius Peladeau, former Director of the Farnsworth Museum in Rockland and currently a volunteer at the L.C. Bates Museum in Hinckley, presented a lecture on Maine historian John Francis Sprague in August to open officially the exhibit on Sprague and his work at the Society. Peladeau is the author of a booklet on Sprague's life and career. Funded in part by the Maine Humanities Council, the exhibit is on loan from the L.C. Bates Museum through May 2000. Mr. Peladeau's appearance in Bethel was made possible by a grant from the Maine Humanities Council.

MY FAMILY TELLS THIS STORY by Snow Flower provides important information on doing research in First American/Native American/Indian genealogy. $19.00.

THE SPEAR AND THE SPINDLE: ANCESTORS OF SIR FRANCIS BRYAN (D. 1550), KT., CHIEF GENTLEMAN OF THE PRIVY CHAMBER FOR HENRY VIII OF ENGLAND, BRYAN, BOURCHIER, BOHUN, FITZALAN AND OTHERS, INCLUDING KINGS AND QUEENS OF ENGLAND, FRANCE, AND OTHER COUNTRIES, SOME MAGNA CARTA SURETIES, AND SOME DESCENDANTS INCLUDING THOSE COMMONLY BELIEVED TO BE ANCESTORS OF REBECCA BRYAN (M. DANIEL BOONE) by T. A. Fuller is available at $29.50. Book Number 3F844.

PAWLET (VERMONT) FOR ONE HUNDRED YEARS written by Hiel Hollister in 1867 contains significant information on this community from the Revolution through the Civil War, including family histories. $22. Book Number H547

GENEALOGICAL HISTORY OF THE STEWARTS by Andrew Stuart and first published two hundred years ago contains family data for twenty-two generations. $35.50. Book Number S781

IN MEMORIAM

Died, 26 June 1999, Rodney K. Howe, Bethel, Life and Honorary Member

Died, 24 July 1999, E. Louise Lincoln, Bethel, Life and Honorary Member

Died, 30 July 1999, Dana C. Douglass, Jr., Life Member

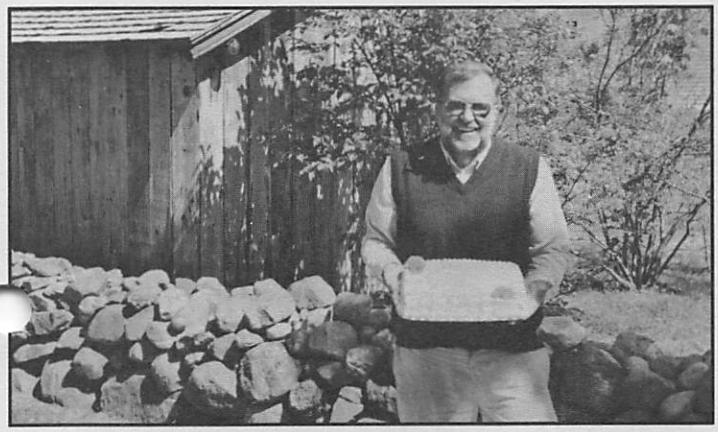
DIARY OF WILLIAM S. HASTINGS

(continued from the last issue)

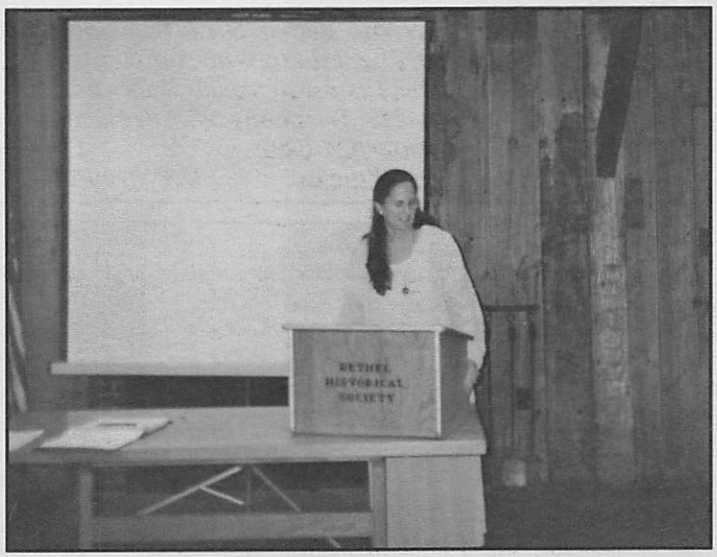
1936--March 23. Clear and warm. Can see only a little snow in drifts and woods. Roads are drying up apparently. Went to Norway to see Swett. My back is fine. Guess the worst is over. Fixing manure spreader. Bob in Portland. Spuds are $1.14 per bu. at Johnsons. March 24. Clear and warm. Fine day! Incubator hatched 238 R.I. Red chix. Put up spuds and washed the muddy ones. I can go to the brooder house on bare ground. Off hand shoot at W. Paris. Didn't do so well. March 25. Cloudy and cool. Misting. Bob in Portland with a load for Hannaford. $1.75 per cwt; $1.05 per bu. (Set up 393 eggs). Incubator hatched 136 chix. Put 237 in brooder in cellar. Hauled hen litter and spread it. Went to tool shed on Intervale and greased machinery that was under water. 6 feet of water in the ground floor. March 26. Fair and warm. Bob in Portland at Hannafords. Set up 254 eggs. March 27. Clouding up. Ruth and I went to Portland with spuds for Johnson. Rained from noon on. Nice trip! We bought a coil spring and 2 mattresses, also contracted for a 3 piece parlor suite and 2 linoleum rugs. March 28. Clear and windy. Bethel with the butter and eggs. Got 1700 of coal and a bale of shavings. Made 4 mash hoppers from metal. Actual cost 40 cents each, 4' X 5 1/2" X 2 1/2". March 29. Clear and warm. Cleaned brooder houses. Went to Greenwood. Roads washed and bridges out. Played golf. Pasture was as dry as a bone. Wrote Mr. Kenyon. March 30. Cloudy and cool but cleared and was hot. Pond cleared of ice. I changed to BVD's. Set up wood burning brooder. Large chix out on ground. March 31. Cloudy, cold and windy. Sawed wood on yard all day. Started for Bethel in eve. and got stuck in mud in swamp. Stayed there for over 1 1/2 hours. Ben Tyler helped me out. April 1. Cold and windy. Took truck to garage. Blown head gasket and bad valves. Worked on it all day. April 2. Snowing hard all day. Cleaned brooder houses. Put chix in brooders. Cleaned 'em all out of my cellar. Took Ruth's mother home and met young Bill at train. Chix hatched. April 3. Snowing and raining. About 7 inches. Ruth and I went to Portland and got our living room suite. Potatoes $1.10 per bu. at Johnsons. Had a treatment at Swetts. Home at 9:30. Bought two new tires for car. $18.60. April 4. Cold and windy. Hauled two loads of manure. Farwell's horse died. Put on new tires. Cleaned brooder house. April 5. Warmer. Greased car. Went to L. Mills and Bethel. Car steers better. Snow melting and roads sloppy. April 6. Rained all day, hard. Tinkered with water fountains etc. Ran 90 odd .38 Special bullets in p.m. Grange meeting in eve. April 7. Clear and warm. Working at sawing wood on yard. I had a liver spell in a.m. Used Ottawa drag saw. Snowed in p.m. about 5-6 inches. April 7. Cold and windy. Went to Bethel with spuds for Bryant. $1.20 per bu. Bob in Fryeburg on P.C.A. Killed veal calf. April 9. Cloudy and warmer. Snow is nearly gone. Sawed and split cordwood all day. Noyes helped us. April 10. Cloudy and warm. Cleaned brooders and finished sawing cordwood. Bob in So. Paris on Farm Bureau. April 11. Snowing. Washed muresco off living room ceiling. Awful job!! Only got half done. Bob in Rumford. I went to Bethel and L. Mills with butter and eggs. Butter 32 cents, eggs 23 cents wholesale. Bot some Pistol Powder and King's Semi-smokeless. April 12. Snowing. Wet and sloppy. Snow is about 5 in. deep. Went to Greenwood. Roads are bad. April 13. Snowing. Washed other half of ceiling. Bob in B. Pond and L. Mills after grain. Stopped snowing but is cloudy. April 14 [blank] April 15. Fair and Warm. Worked in the woods. April 16. Worked in the woods all day. April 17. Cloudy. Worked in woods in a.m. Norway in p.m. My last trip to Dr. Swett's for one month. April 18. Clear and cool. Lockes Mills and Bethel with butter and eggs. Made 8 more mash hoppers. Cleaned 2 brooder houses. April 19. Clear and windy. Fairly warm. Went to Greenwood via W. Paris. Bethel to see doctor for Ma Cole. Played golf. April 20. Cloudy. Sawed wood all day. Half done. All in at night. Got my powder scales and reloaded 25 cartridges. April 21. Raining. Put up some seed potatoes. Clint Littlefield here to do ceilings. I ordered a new Nash suit of him. Shoot and meeting of F.& G. Ass'n of W. Paris in evening. Ordered Portland Press Herald. April 23. Fair and warmer. Worked on brooder house. Crew finished sawing wood. April 24. Snow on ground in morning. Clear and windy. Finished brooder house. Helped Ormie [Farwell] haul pulp. Sand blew on intervale. Split wood in p.m. April 25. Warming up some. Cleaned brooders. Split wood. Finished splitting. Brooder house caught fire. I happened to be near and put it out before it got going much. April 26. Raining and cold. Stayed home. Bob and Dad went to Fryeburg. Chub [horse] was sick all night. April 27. Cold and windy in morning. Warmed up. Dad sick. I am down with German measles. Out in p.m. but feel bum. Crew hauled pulp off home field. April 28. Fair and warmer. Feel some better. Bob has it. Dad still sick. Made a brush drag and started breaking up the paper on the intervale [egg carton-like residue left from flood due to discharge from paper-making process]. Sick all night. April 29. Cloudy and warm. Bob is sick abed. So is Dad. I'm well broken out. April 30. Warm. Grass is starting. Turned water on chicken range. Planted peas. May 1. Warm and fair. Beautiful day. Breaking paper off the grassland. Bob sowing cyanamid. Dave driving horses on rake. May 2. Hot. Dragged grassland and harrowed 2 acres of spud land. Bob in Bethel. Went to Bethel in eve. and got a haircut. Dad still sick abed. May 3. Cloudy and showery. Went to Grafton and had an outdoor dinner. May 4. Fair and warm. Farming and changing chix to range. May 5. Fair and warm. Soaking potatoes. May 6. Harrowing. May 7. Fair. Plowing oat ground. Peas are breaking ground. May 8. Fair and warm. Planted 1 1/4 acres potatoes. Fitted 5 acres oat ground. May 9. Fair and warm. Put up seed spuds. Soaked spuds. Went to Bethel. May basket in eve. May 10. Warm. Nice day. Stayed home most all day. Sold some seed spuds $1.75 per bu. Table stock $1.50 per bu. May 11. Fair and warm. Harrowing. Leaves are out and grass is tall. Looks like summer. May 12. Fair and warm. Put up spuds all day. May 13. Fair and warm. Bob in Portland with a load for Johnson. Harrowed. May 14. Colder 'n heck!! Some change. Windy and squally. Harrowed and froze. Bob planted spuds. May 15. Warmer and cloudy. Harrowed. Bob planted. I went to see Swett in p.m. Last trip. May 16. Cooler 'n ever! Water froze and burst my pipe lines. Froze leaves off and blackened peas. High wind. Went to Bethel. Brot home 60 cwt of grain. May 17. Warming up. Greenwood. Put away sleds. Sold 26 bu. seed potatoes. Nearly sold out. May 18. Warm and fair. Harrowed potato ground. Plowed. So warm I drove tractor without my shirt. May 19. Colder. Harrowing. May 20. Colder yet and windy. Drove tractor with all clothes I own on my back. Harrowed for Noyes 5 1/2 hours. May 21. Windy and cold. Finished harrowing on Bean piece. Fixed spreader, spread manure and harrowed garden. All ready to plant. Maybasket for Bob in eve. Car tagged with safety stamp. Got Kato Korn (2 bu.). Got back Grange Fire Ins. Policy. O.K. May 22. Heavy white frost. Warmed up some. Planted some garden. May 23. Plowed on Crow Piece. May

24. Fair and warm. Ruth's folks came up here. We looked over the Henry Hastings timber lots. May 25. Colder. Plowed for Dave Enman. Bob bought the Henry H. timberland and house for $1000. May 26. Fair and warmer. Plowed and harrowed. May 27. Raining. Put up seed etc. ut seed. May 28. Colder and windy. Harrowed on ours and Noyes. May 29. Colder and wet. Planted on Crow Piece. Finished planting 20 acres. May 31. Fair and warmer. Greenwood. Ruth went to Baccalaureate at Gould's. June 1. Fair and warmer. Plowed for John. Bob planted spuds for Dave. June 2. Fair and warm. Harrowed for Dave on oat ground. Then plowed our corn ground and millet ground. June 3. Fair and warm. Harrowed for corn and millet. Getting awful dry. June 4. Fair and warm. Went to Graduation at Gould's. Planted 2 acres of Kate Korn in p.m. Used about 1 bu. of seed. Potatoes are $2 per bu. June 5. Fair and hot. Plowed under the winter rye on Horse pasture. Some of it was 3 1/2 to 4 ft. tall. June 6. Fair and hot. Cultivated with horses on "Ned Piece." Harrowed some. Wore shorts and burned to a crisp!

(continued in the next issue)



Executive Director Stan Howe was presented with a 25th anniversary cake made by Trustee Lois Kilroy in observance of his quarter century of professional association with the Society during the St. Never's Day yard sale held at the Robinson House in May.



Dr. Martha McNamara, assistant professor of history at the University of Maine at Orono, who holds a Ph.D. in New England Studies from Boston University, delivered the 1999 Hall Memorial Lecture as the first event in this year's Sudbury Canada Days, summer heritage festival of Bethel Historical Society. Her topic was " 'A Magnificent Temple of Justice': Courthouses in Maine and Massachusetts, 1750-1850."

EDITOR'S CORNER

The comments on the new name and look of the COURIER were overwhelmingly positive. We expect to make more changes in the future, but still offer a variety of information about the Society and the regional past. Reader's comments are always welcome. Several have written to tell us how much they enjoy reading this publication. We also have gotten quite a few very favorable comments from genealogical and newspaper columnists. Thanks for all this support. It makes the challenge of editorship all that much more fun.

SRH

Join the Bethel Historical Society, Western Maine's historical research center.

Membership in the Society entitles you to:

1. free admission to the museum
2. special discounts in the museum store
3. preferred rate for meeting room rental
4. special library and archival privileges
5. quarterly publication, *The Courier*
6. reduced course fees
7. voting rights in the Society
8. special invitations to Society events

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Priscella and Dean Walker

MEMBER PROFILES

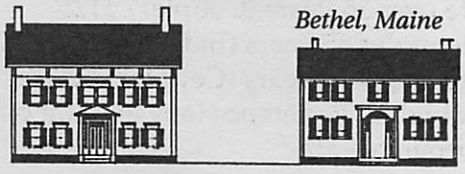
Dean and Priscella Walker

Dean Walker was born in Gardiner, MA. His family later moved to Candia, NH, where they operated a poultry farm. He attended local schools and graduated from Manchester Central High School. Following graduation, he apprenticed with his father to become a gunsmith. In 1953, he joined the Marine Corps and remained in the service for four years. He met his wife while stationed at the naval base in Kittery, ME. Upon completion of his military duty, he worked in various machine shops in the Portsmouth/Dover, NH area. In 1977, he joined the Portsmouth Shipyard as a machinist, where he later became a supervisor. He retired in 1995. In addition, for a number of years, he operated a part-time gunshop until the mid-1990s. Following retirement, he became associated with the Kittery Conservation Commission, active in the Kittery Point Congregational Church, and as a trustee of the Church's Cemetery Committee. He enjoys collecting, repairing and restoring model trains.

Priscella Walker was born in Kittery and is a graduate of Traip Academy. Before her marriage, she was employed in a jewelry store. Later she managed an antique jewelry shop in Portsmouth, NH and was Director of the John Paul Jones House in Portsmouth for five years before her retirement. She and her husband have three children and five grandchildren. Her hobbies include crafts, knitting, sewing, genealogy and travel. She and Dean have a condo at Eden Ridge and divide their time between Kittery and Bethel, where they enjoy outdoor activities throughout the year. Life members of the Society, they are generous donors and very active volunteers for the Society, serving on the Capital Campaign Committee. She is also a trustee and chairs the Museum Shop Committee. He serves on the Building Committee and is often found working on building related projects and issues.

BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Bethel, Maine



REGIONAL HISTORY CENTER

The Bethel Historical Society
P.O. Box 12
Bethel, ME 04217-0012

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